



## Athens Clarke County MSWL September 22, 2000

### Introduction

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GEPD) requested that the Georgia Division of Public Health (GDPH) address health issues associated with the Athens-Clarke County Municipal Solid Waste Landfill, a county-managed, operating landfill. GDPH reviewed available groundwater sampling data to determine whether past exposure could have harmed employees and residents that lived on the site and whether precautionary measures conducted and planned are protective of public health.

### Site Description and History

The Athens-Clarke County Municipal Solid Waste Landfill occupies approximately 300 acres southeast of downtown Athens, Georgia, on land in both Clarke and Oglethorpe counties. It is the only operational landfill for those counties. The landfill is bordered by Lexington road (U.S. 78) and Dunlap Road to the south and east respectively, by agricultural land to the north, and a creek to the west. The landfill is visible from Lexington Road, which is the only road providing access.

### Environmental Sampling/Results

Tetrachloroethene and vinyl chloride were identified in an on-site drinking water well at levels above comparison values in 1988. Upon discovering the contamination employees were immediately provided with an alternative water source. The well was converted to a monitoring well, and no drinking water wells remain on site.

Forty-five on-site shallow and deep water aquifer monitoring wells have been installed and sampled for an approved set of indicator parameters, inorganic chemicals, and volatile organic compounds. Analyses of sample results indicate that several contaminant plumes

exist in groundwater, and the plumes are moving toward nearby residential properties.

Athens-Clarke County and GEPD collected samples from individual water wells within 500 to 1,000 feet of the landfill property in 1998 and from 1992 through 1993. No contaminants were detected in any private well during any sampling event at levels that exceeded comparison values. Therefore, no one off the site has been exposed to contaminants at levels that would cause adverse health effects. Athens-Clarke County provided municipal water for residents living within 500 feet of the landfill and has provided annual testing upon request of all remaining individual water wells within 1,000 feet of the landfill.

### Conclusions

Currently, the site poses ***no apparent public health hazard*** because exposure has stopped, and actions being taken will likely prevent future exposure.

### Recommendations

GDPH recommends the following:

- To ensure that residents are not exposed to contaminants present in groundwater, contaminated groundwater should not be used for consumption or any other use where people may come into contact with it.
- Athens-Clarke County should continue remediation efforts.
- Athens-Clarke County should continue monitoring off-site groundwater.
- GDPH should establish a public health information repository at the local public library for residents to review public health reports pertaining to the site.